Network Working Group
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Obsoletes: RFC 812

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# NICNAME/WHOIS

## STATUS OF THIS MEMO

This RFC is the official specification of the NICNAME/WHOIS protocol. This memo describes the protocol and the service. This is an update of RFC 812. Distribution of this memo is unlimited.

## INTRODUCTION

The NICNAME/WHOIS Server is a TCP transaction based query/response server, running on the SRI-NIC machine (26.0.0.73 or 10.0.0.51), that provides netwide directory service to internet users. It is one of a series of internet name services maintained by the DDN Network Information Center (NIC) at SRI International on behalf of the Defense Communications Agency (DCA). The server is accessible across the Internet from user programs running on local hosts, and it delivers the full name, U.S. mailing address, telephone number, and network mailbox for DDN users who are registered in the NIC database.

This server, together with the corresponding WHOIS Database can also deliver online look-up of individuals or their online mailboxes, network organizations, DDN nodes and associated hosts, and TAC telephone numbers. The service is designed to be user-friendly and the information is delivered in human-readable format. DCA strongly encourages network hosts to provide their users with access to this network service.

## WHO SHOULD BE IN THE DATABASE

DCA requests that each individual with a directory on an ARPANET or MILNET host, who is capable of passing traffic across the DoD Internet, be registered in the NIC WHOIS Database. MILNET TAC users must be registered in the database. To register, send via electronic mail to REGISTRAR@SRI-NIC.ARPA your full name, middle initial, U.S. mailing address (including mail stop and full explanation of abbreviations and acronyms), ZIP code, telephone (including Autovon and FTS, if available), and one network mailbox. Contact the DDN Network Information Center, REGISTRAR@SRI-NIC.ARPA or (800) 235-3155, for assistance with registration.

PROTOCOL

To access the NICNAME/WHOIS server:

Connect to the SRI-NIC service host at TCP service port 43 (decimal).

Send a single "command line", ending with <CRLF> (ASCII CR and LF).

Receive information in response to the command line. The server closes its connection as soon as the output is finished.

EXISTING USER PROGRAMS

NICNAME is the global name for the user program, although many sites have chosen to use the more familiar name of "WHOIS". There are versions of the NICNAME user program for TENEX, TOPS-20, and UNIX. The TENEX and TOPS-20 programs are written in assembly language (FAIL/MACRO), and the UNIX version is written in C. They are easy to invoke, taking one argument which is passed directly to the NICNAME server at SRI-NIC. Contact NIC@SRI-NIC.ARPA for copies of the program.

COMMAND LINES AND REPLIES

A command line is normally a single name specification. Note that the specification formats will evolve with time; the best way to obtain the most recent documentation on name specifications is to give the server a command line consisting of "?<CRLF>" (that is, a question-mark alone as the name specification). The response from the NICNAME server will list all possible formats that can be used. The responses are not currently intended to be machine-readable; the information is meant to be passed back directly to a human user. The following three examples illustrate the use of NICNAME as of October 1985.

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Command line: ?
Response:

Please enter a name or a NIC handle, such as "Smith" or "SRI-NIC".
Starting with a period forces a name-only search; starting with
exclamation point forces handle-only.  Examples:

   Smith      [looks for name or handle SMITH]
   !SRI-NIC   [looks for handle SRI-NIC only]
   .Smith, John
              [looks for name JOHN SMITH only]

Adding "..." to the argument will match anything from that point,
e.g. "ZU..." will match ZUL, ZUM, etc.

To search for mailboxes, use one of these forms:

   Smith@     [looks for mailboxes with username SMITH]
   @Host      [looks for mailboxes on HOST]
   Smith@Host
              [Looks for mailboxes with username SMITH on HOST]

To obtain the entire membership list of a group or organization,
or a list of all authorized users of a host, precede the name of
the host or organization by an asterisk, i.e. *SRI-NIC. [CAUTION:
If there are a lot of members, this will take a long time!]  You
may use exclamation point and asterisk, or a period and asterisk
together.

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Command line: fischer
Response:

Fischer, Charles (CF17)      fischer@UWISC          (608) 262-1204
Fischer, Herman (HF)         HFischer@USC-ECLB      (818) 902-5139
Fischer, Jeffery H. (JHF1)   FISCHER@LL-XN          (617) 863-5500
                                                    ext 4403 or 4689
Fischer, Kenneth (KF8)       SAC.SIUBO@USC-ISIE     (402) 294-5161
                                                    (AV)  271-5161
Fischer, Marty (MF28)        MFISCHER@DCA-EMS       (703) 437-2344
Fischer, Michael J. (MJF)    FISCHER@YALE           (203) 436-0744
Fischer, Nancy C. (NANCY)    FISCHER@SRI-NIC        (415) 859-2539
Fischer, Richard A. (RAF4)   Fisher Richa@LLL-MFE   (415) 422-5032
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To single out any individual entry, repeat the command using the argument "!HANDLE" instead of "NAME", where the handle is in parentheses following the name.

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Command line: !nancy
Response:

Fischer, Nancy C. (NANCY)  FISCHER@SRI-NIC SRI International
Telecommunication Sciences Center
333 Ravenswood Avenue, EJ289
Menlo Park, California 94025
Phone: (415) 859-2539
MILNET TAC user

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Harrenstien, K., and White, V., "NICNAME/WHOIS," RFC-812, Network Information Center, SRI International, March 1982.

2. Harrenstien, K., "NAME/FINGER," RFC-742, Network Information Center, SRI International, December 1977.